

FOREWORD

IN a small country church where I first attended Mass and received First Reconciliation and Holy Communion, I was fascinated by two rather large statues of our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph. One could easily understand that these were images of holy people. As we grew older, we came to realize that Our Lady, St. Joseph, and thousands of others live with God in heaven. In school, we learned the names and lives of some of the other Saints. Often, we were surprised at the different clothing they wore.

As we learned more and more about the Saints, we began to realize that their pictures and statues gave us a good idea of where and when they lived. We had opportunities to hear and read their stories, and, at the same time, come to know and understand that even though the Saints grew up in different countries and cultures, the way they lived and loved God and neighbor was something we could do.

Today, we have many role models like the astronauts, outstanding builders, artists, wholesome athletes, self-sacrificing public servants, learned researchers, professors, doctors, and judges, and, of course, our parents, brothers, and

sisters. As we all know, adults often ask children the age-old question, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” It is a reasonable question, and we appreciate their interest in us. Sometimes it starts us thinking about our personal futures. The beauty is that no matter what we want to be, we can carry out our plans and dreams and still strive to be Saints.

During his years as Pope, our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, has given us over four hundred additional role models in newly canonized Saints. These holy people not only carried out their choices in life but also, at the same time, lived holy and saintly lives.

This volume gives children and adults alike a number of role models. If we want to follow our chosen way of life while imitating the life of a particular Saint, we might want to recite each day the prayer provided for our chosen Saint. Or, we may be attracted to a number of ways other Saints lived holy lives. In any case, it is important to read and recall their good lives, and pray to one or several Saints each day. This book can easily help us follow the Saint or Saints we really want to imitate.

Father Thomas J. Donaghy

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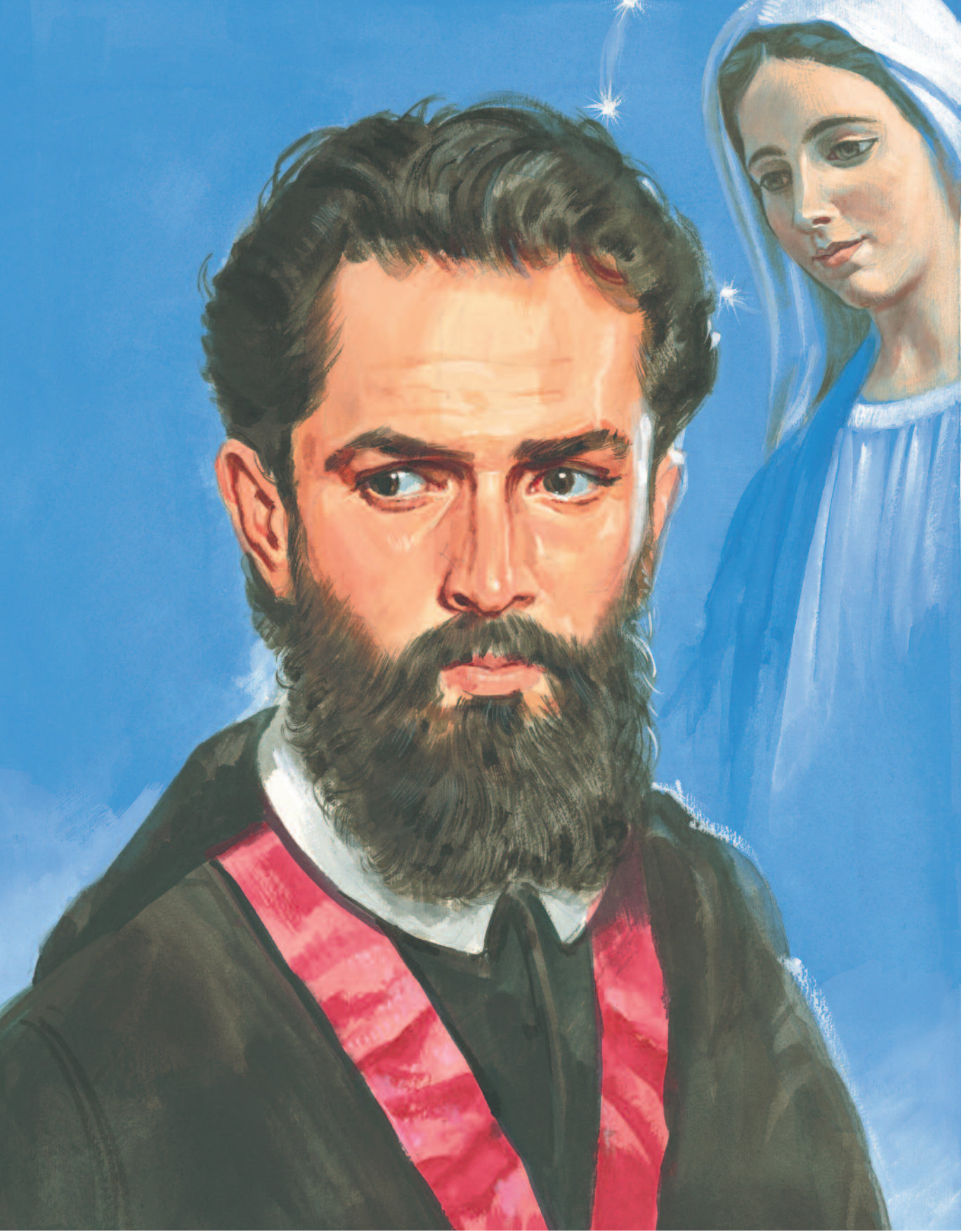
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~ Mother of God ~



~ Patron of the Poor ~



~ Patron of Writers ~

SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES

Bishop and Doctor of the Church

January 24

ST. FRANCIS, son of the Count de Sales, was born near Annecy in Savoy, in 1567. Showing an early inclination for the ecclesiastical state he received tonsure at eleven years of age. Soon afterward, he was sent to Paris to study philosophy and theology. He went on to the University of Padua where he was honored with a doctorate in both canon and civil law.

On his return home, with the reluctant consent of his parents, Francis entered the priesthood. A little later, he took upon himself the arduous mission of Chablais, where Calvinism had obtained a stronghold. In the midst of the most enormous difficulties, he pursued his labors with apostolic heroism, and was rewarded with the most wonderful fruits of conversion. While engaged in this work he received his appointment as coadjutor to the Bishop of Geneva, whom he succeeded as Bishop in 1602.

He labored zealously in his diocese for the clergy and people, and extended his labors elsewhere,

preaching the Lenten sermons at various places outside of the diocese. He also composed several instructive works for the edification of the faithful. In 1610 he founded the Order of the Visitation, with the help of the Baroness de Chantal, now St. Jane Frances.

Amid his constant pastoral work Francis found time to write the book that has made him known to succeeding ages: *Introduction to a Devout Life* (1609). It shows how ordinary life can be sanctified; no problem is too small for its author: dress, entertainments, flirtations, etc. His one concern is how to lead the reader to the love of God and the imitation of Christ.

In an age when fanaticism was the rule in controversies, Francis manifested an exceptional restraint and meekness. His pastoral zeal, which was anxious for the sanctification of the laity and the adaptation of the religious life to the new needs, marks a turning point in the history of spirituality. He died in 1622 with the word "Jesus" on his lips, and was canonized in 1665 by Pope Alexander VII.

PRAYER: *Father in heaven, You prompted St. Francis de Sales to become all things to all for the salvation of all. May his example inspire us to dedicated love in the service of our brothers and sisters.*

SAINT PATRICK

Bishop and Apostle of Ireland

March 17

THE date and place of St. Patrick's birth are uncertain. He was born about the year 389, the son of Calpurnius, a Roman-British deacon, and Conchessa. When he was sixteen, he was carried as a captive into Ireland and obliged to serve a heathen master as a herdsman. Despite the harshness of the life there, he not only held on to his Faith but also learned the science of prayer and contemplation.

After six years he effected a miraculous escape and returned home. In a dream, he was told to go back and Christianize Ireland. St. Patrick prepared for his task by studying in the monastery of Lerins from about 412–415 and was ordained at Auxerre by St. Amator about 417.

In 431, after a period during which his vocation to Ireland was tested by the hesitancy of his superiors in entrusting such a mission to him, St. Patrick was sent to assist Bishop Paladius in Ireland. On the death of the latter, St. Patrick was consecrated Bishop by St. Ger-

manus (432) after receiving the approbation of Pope Celestine I. He traveled the length and breadth of Ireland, planting the Faith everywhere despite the hostility of the Druids, and succeeded in converting several members of the royal family.

On a visit to Rome in 442, he was commissioned by Pope Leo the Great to organize the Church of Ireland and on his return made Armagh the primatial See, establishing Bishops in various places.

In winning a pagan nation for Christ, St. Patrick established many monasteries for men and women and made it famous for its seats of piety and learning. In the ensuing centuries Irish monks carried the Faith to England, France, and Switzerland.

After living a completely apostolic life of labor and prayer, St. Patrick died on March 17, 461, in the monastery of Saul, in Down in Ulster, leaving behind his *Confessions*, which give a vivid picture of a great man of God.

PRAYER: *God, You sent Patrick to preach Your glory to the Irish people. Through his merits and intercession, grant that we who have the honor of bearing the name of Christian may constantly proclaim Your wonderful designs to others.*



~ Patron of Ireland ~